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*The Administration of the Colonies ; (the fourth edition) where-
in their rights and constitutions are discussed and stated. By
Thomas Pownall, late Governour and Commander in Chief of
his Majesty's Provinces, Massachusetts Bay and South Caroli-
na, and Lieutenant Governour of New Jersey. Pulchrum est
benefacere Reipublicæ, etiam benedicere haud absurdum est.
London, J. Walter, 1768. 8vo, pp. 420.*

THIS work of Governour Pownall was one of the most able that appeared on the subject of the disputes, which terminated in the Independence of the United States. His views were capacious and honest. He considered the inhabitants of the Colonies entitled to all the rights of the inhabitants of England. His object was to procure the acknowledgment of these, and a fair parliamentary representation of them. He considered the situation of the Colonies to be like that of the Counties Palatine in England in regard to the right of representation in Parliament. His arguments in favour of the policy of thus admitting the Colonies to send members to Parliament, are founded not only on the justice and equity of the measure, and the satisfaction it would give in the Colonies, but on the calculation of the prospective importance of commerce, in the balance of national power, and the vast accession of wealth, that would

be derived from developing and securing to Great Britain the trade of these extensive and growing colonies. His plan was too liberal and noble for the statesmen of that day, who intended to obtain the same results, through oppression and arbitrary power. The consequences of their folly and arrogance were soon made manifest; they, however, only precipitated an event, which the force of circumstances rendered inevitable. The wiser policy of Governour Pownall might have delayed it, and perhaps produced some modification whenever it should have been brought about; but on looking round us now, it is easy to see that the burthen of English monopoly would have daily become more onerous, and have caused an early separation.

The style of this work is harsh and inelegant; the following extract however is an exception; we select it from near the commencement of his work, to give some idea of his manner of thinking.

“In the first uncultured ages of Europe, when men sought nothing but to possess, and to secure possession, the power of the *sword* was the predominant spirit of the world; it was that which formed the Roman empire; and it was the same, which in the declension of that empire, divided again the nations into the several governments, formed upon the ruins of it.”

“When men afterward, from leisure, began to exercise the powers of their minds in (what is called) learning; religion, the only learning of that time, led them to a concern for their spiritual interests, and consequently led them under their spiritual guides. The power of *religion* would hence as naturally predominate and rule, and did actually become the ruling spirit of the policy of Europe. It was this spirit, which for many ages formed, and gave away kingdoms; this, which created the anointed lords over them, or again excommunicated and execrated these sovereigns; this that united and allied the various nations, or plunged them into war and bloodshed; this that formed the balance of the power of the whole, and actuated the second grand scene of Europe’s history.”

“But since the people of Europe have formed their communication with the commerce of Asia; have been for some ages past, settling on all sides of the Atlantic Ocean, and in America, have been possessing every seat and channel of commerce, and have planted and raised that to an interest which has taken root;—since they now feel the powers which derive from this, and are extending it to, and combining it with others; the spirit of *commerce* will become that predominant power, which will form the

general policy, and rule the powers of Europe : and hence a grand commercial interest, the basis of a great commercial dominion, under the present scite and circumstances of the world, will be formed and arise. The rise and forming of this commercial interest is what precisely constitutes the present crisis."

Governour Pownall was the author of some other works ;— a memorial to the sovereigns of Europe, another to his own sovereign, and a third to the sovereigns of the United States of America, and a small tract concerning the Gulf Stream. He had a taste for science, and was a member of the Royal Society. In politicks he was a whig, flourished with Pitt, and sunk under Bute and toryism. He was the most constitutional and national governour, that ever presided over Massachusetts in its colonial state ; he never practised any intrigue against the liberties of the people under his charge, whom he considered entitled to all the rights of the people of the mother country. One of the immediate causes of the fall of his administration was a magnanimous vote of the legislature of Massachusetts, to erect a statue to Lord Howe. This was to cost five hundred pounds ! Hutchinson, who was endeavouring to prostrate the liberties of his country, to serve his own ambition, made use of this vote, and some of the ablest and most honest men in the legislature, and the administration of Pownall, were the victims of it. There is one feature at least, which seems immutable in our country. A hard earned reward to patriotick merit, or a liberal allowance to talent in official stations, will place it in the power of the dullest demagogues to turn the wisest and most virtuous men, who may have voted them, out of their places ; but the same sagacious citizens, who thus exercise their discretion, will quietly be cheated out of millions, by paper money, banks, or pretended economy. Governour Pownall, though a disappointed, was not a soured man ; after the death of his wife, he resigned his seat in Parliament, and died, we believe, about the year 1790.